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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KABUL 003194

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STATE FOR SCA/FO, SCA/A, S/CRS
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E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/08/2017

TAGS: [KDEM](#) [PGOV](#) [AF](#)

SUBJECT: KARZAI CHIEF OF STAFF OUTLINES PRIORITIES FOR
POTUS MEETING IN NEW YORK

REF: A. KABUL 2070

[1](#)B. KABUL 1394

[1](#)C. KABUL 3054

Classified By: DCM Christopher Dell for reasons 1.4 (B) and (D).

SUMMARY

[1](#)1. (C) President Karzai's Chief of Staff outlined for the Charge his government's priorities for the planned meeting with President Bush in New York. These include electricity as a top development priority, the government's openness to discussions with the Taliban premised on respect for Afghanistan's Constitutional integrity, and possible leadership changes at the Ministry of Interior to advance police reform. He noted with interest the suggestion that a discussion of Karzai's vision for sub-national governance would be appropriate and useful. END SUMMARY.

KARZAI'S PRIORITIES

[1](#)2. (C) President Karzai's Chief of Staff, Mohammed Umer Daudzai, used his September 19 meeting with the Charge to outline several issues Karzai would like to address in his meeting with President Bush on the margins of the UN General Assembly in New York. Daudzai said he expected Karzai to follow up on the issues discussed at Camp David on August 6-7, with particular reference to addressing Afghanistan's power shortage, discussions with the Taliban, and police reform. Daudzai reiterated that the Afghan government's top development priorities are roads and electricity. While Karzai is satisfied with progress on roads, he said the Afghan government remains concerned about electricity, especially in Kabul (ref A).

TALKS WITH TALIBAN WITHIN CONSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK

[1](#)3. (C) Karzai will clarify his stance on discussions with the Taliban following recent inconsistent media reports on the issue. Daudzai characterized recent contradictory Taliban statements on the possibility of entering into talks with the

government as indicative of disunity within the Taliban. Daudzai said that Karzai had met that same day with a variety of power brokers who agreed with the president that the government should remain open to talking with those Taliban who are open to reconciliation within the existing Constitutional framework. He underlined that some Taliban "will never talk to us."

MOI REFORM: TOWARD BETTER POLICE AND GOVERNANCE

¶4. (C//NF) Karzai remains dissatisfied with the police, according to Daudzai, and police reform is one of his top priorities. Daudzai added that the problem for Afghanistan is not the strength of the Taliban, but the weakness of the police. Daudzai said, "I don't trust any Ministry of Interior officials; they all look like thieves and smugglers because that's all I hear about them. We have to fix it." He expects that Karzai will make a decision soon on senior leadership changes at the MOI, and that these changes will be implemented "early in the new year." He also said there may be changes "in the next few days" to the Kabul police chief and the chief of counter-terrorism. Daudzai expressed concern that Karzai's political opponents, such as the National Front, may try to "shake up the security situation" as the next elections approach. (NOTE: Burnahuddin Rabani's National Front consists mostly of former Northern Alliance supporters and constitutes Karzai's main organized opposition in Parliament (ref B). END NOTE.) Daudzai also said the government wants to continue early discussions about developing an Afghan air force.

¶5. (C) Daudzai touted the removal of civil administration from the MOI and the creation of the new Office of Local

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Administration as an important step in MOI reform. He said that Karzai feels that sub-national governance is "in good hands" under its director, Ghulam Jelani Popol, and that he is pleased with the international community's response to the new office (ref C). Daudzai was receptive to the Charge's suggestion that a discussion of Karzai's vision for how to extend government authority to the sub-national level could be a useful and appropriate topic for his meeting with President Bush.

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